

THE GREAT BRITISH DISCUSSION GROUP

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***The War Against the BBC* by Patrick Barwise and Peter York (Penguin, November 2020)**

Barwise and York's *The War Against the BBC: How an Unprecedented Combination of Hostile Forces Is Destroying Britain's Greatest Cultural Institution... And Why You Should Care* is the definitive ("hair-raising" – Polly Toynbee, *The Guardian*) analysis of the external challenges now facing the BBC. It could hardly be more topical, with the further cuts just announced in the Corporation's real funding, already down almost 30 per cent since 2010 against rising real content and distribution costs. The book also covers the growing competition from broadcast and online rivals; the impact of technology and consumption trends; why subscription funding would greatly increase the cost to viewers and listeners (and won't even be technically feasible for many years); the endless attacks on the BBC's impartiality, mainly by right-leaning politicians, think tanks and newspapers; and the wider culture war context.

"A 'must' for anyone interested in the future of what many regard as Britain's most important cultural institution and our greatest source of 'soft power' on the world stage" - John Arlidge,

The Sunday Times

"A frighteningly informative torrent of history, politics, global economics and warm sympathy" - Libby Purves, *The Times*

"This book's value lies in its accumulation of myth-busting data... [Its] urgent conclusion establishes just how much Britain stands to lose if the BBC as we know it falls" - Dorian Lynskey, *The Guardian*

"The authors capture the extraordinary animus directed at the BBC from some quarters, and the hollowness of some of the anti-BBC arguments" – Alex Barker, *Financial Times*

"Scrupulously researched... exposes the myths behind the onslaught. The idea of a 'silent majority' exasperated by the BBC's liberal values is at odds with trust ratings that put it above every other news provider" - Ian Burrell, *The Independent*

"Written with wit and panache ... like taking a stroll through the social and political history of Britain from Thatcher onwards" – Ivor Gaber, *The New European*

"This entertainingly written but deeply serious book should be read by anyone who cares about our profession – and perhaps, in the light of events across the Atlantic, our democracy as well" – Richard Tait, *British Journalism Review*

"A thorough and perceptive analysis of some of the big challenges facing the BBC, and the malevolent and dishonest forces raging against it" - Patrick Howse, *Byline Times*

"Packed with facts and indispensable for its depth and scope" - Pat Holland,

Journal of British Cinema and Television

"The value of this book is to remind us that arguments against the BBC are often dishonest or partial, often strongly motivated by vested interests - and often hope for its destruction while affecting to hope for its reform. It may make you, as it did me, think that in this accursed year there's something to be said for keeping a hold of nurse in fear of finding something worse" – Sam Leith, *UnHerd*

<https://www.patrickbarwise.com/the-war-against-the-bbc>